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BULLETIN

OF THE

College of
William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia



Baccalaureate Address
Delivered at William and Mary College,
Williamsburg, Va., June 11, 1918


By
CLARENCE HODSON
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A Foreword

"Nothing is, but thinking made it so."

On this occasion you shall hear the understanding of an individual upon certain subjects; or, rather, a part of what he now believes. As these beliefs have changed, they will likely undergo further changes as he understands better. Let us hope that error will be eliminated with each succeeding viewpoint.

Some opinions concern basic principles of fact, and one may be mistaken about them; but there are other things to be mentioned that shall prove true, if they are believed in, even if not otherwise so. Some of these thoughts have proved to be happy and helpful for others, and they are now to be passed on in the hope they may prove interesting and helpful to those who hear and understand them; otherwise the message can be of no service in assisting any to a decision of life's problems and controversies.

The basis of mutual understanding must be established and maintained, or we cannot intelligibly bear testimony of our respective positions and will fail for lack of mutual understanding, as happened during a recent case in a district court, when a deaf man went to law with a deaf man, and the judge was deafer than either. The plaintiff claimed that defendant owed him five months' rent. The defendant answered that he had ground his corn by night; the judge then decided: "Why quarrel? She is your mother; keep her between you."

THE UNIVERSITY OF HARD KNOCKS

The best degree conferred by any university or college, for practical education, is indeed often issued by an educational institution, unincorporated, without a campus or college buildings, without laboratories, dormitories, study halls or class rooms; without endowment, faculty, or even a college yell.

Its lessons are taught not at one place, but throughout the land, and there are no holiday or vacation periods at Christmas, Easter or in the summertime. Yet it is recognized as one of the most popular and efficient schools for obtaining a practical education, based upon solid knowledge, by everyone who would square theories with facts and learn how to accomplish things which count.

I refer to The University of Hard Knocks.

To qualify for matriculation in this practical university no certificate of an entrance examination board is required. Each student may enter as he is, whether his scholarship be great or small. Yet, if he shall hope to progress in his studies, he should possess to a peculiar degree that sort of sense which is not so common as its name indicates.

Affiliated with this university is the "School of Experience." It is perhaps the most costly school for its students of any known. This is not because the school is not endowed with substantial funds, but because experience is a dear teacher.

The graduates of the University of Hard Knocks are a fine body of men, but it must not be assumed that they are rough and ignorant. Some there are of the lower type, but college-bred men are largely represented and are perhaps the most brilliant examples of its alumni. College education is the best possible equipment for matriculation in our great university of life, and every day and year spent in college is well worth while.

CLASSICAL COLLEGE GRADUATES

Many college alumni are prone to dwell for awhile in the land of romance, believing they will soar triumphantly above the world, riding their college diplomas, as witches were supposed to ride aloft on their broomsticks; but this is fancy and not fact. Fortunately, or unfortunately, we are living in a practical age. Theories must be adjusted to square with facts.

The practical effect of receiving a college diploma of graduation may prove injurious to any young man who relies too greatly upon its magic potency. It is a fine start, but a poor finish. Graduates must not feel that they are already well educated, fully developed and thrice armed intellectually. Their college course was intended only to ground them in theory and data of learning and training their minds in respect to analytical and reasoning powers; later these must be applied to facts and conditions of daily life.

One can go out into the busy world fitted to engage in a business or professional career, whereby he has the opportunity to erect a practical structure upon a theoretical foundation. Then will preparedness meet opportunity and conquer. How agreeably one will realize the value of those lessons which every hour of college study now will yield! While learned, they were not needed; may they never be needed, but not learned!

I believe it was President Taft who once said that some men have succeeded in life because they went to college; others had succeeded in spite of having gone to college. We all know, it's the man that counts.

The University of Hard Knocks is open for students all the year, and was never better attended than now. I advise every college man to take a post-graduate course in that university, for its course is both interesting and instructive.

EDUCATION

The general method of improving the mind is called education. Many have attempted to define it, but they do not agree as to what an education is. The term is indefinable, because it varies in the conception of each individual, but we know that it is subject to misbranding. We can identify a good many things that are not an education. We know that it may be found partly in books, and we know that much of it is not and cannot be confined to printed pages. We know that it is gained not only by study, but by observation. We know that money is helpful to attain it, and yet it may not be bought with mere money.

The experiments of Benjamin Franklin, which fortunately we are able to follow in his own language, show that he was a philosopher and a scientist possessed of an open mind and unremitting purpose to learn every lesson derivable from his experiments. He was patient and persistent, as all must be who are to win success in any walk of life. He succeeded without a diploma, although a college education helps one greatly, and considerably adds to the probabilities of realizing a successful career, with all that term implies.

Socrates, the Greek philosopher, reputed to have been the wisest man who ever lived, once said: "I have lived to learn that I know nothing." Therefore, he improved every opportunity. We may do the same.

Wisdom is not contagious in the manner that measles are. Yet wisdom may be freely absorbed, either consciously or unconsciously, by anyone with a mental attitude alert for gaining knowledge. Desire is the key. Those who hunger and thirst for knowledge and seek it persistently are pretty sure to attain their purpose. The Psalmist said: "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." A prayer for greater knowledge of things spiritual, as well as knowledge of things temporal, will be answered.

PSYCHOLOGY

In comparatively recent years we have another study called psychology. It is delightful, because it teaches the methods and caprices of the human mind. Alexander Pope said: "A proper study of mankind is man." Some believe they know human nature, but none really knows much about it, or enough.

Scientific salesmanship is one branch of psychology and perhaps the most practical and profitable field in its application.

During the last few years a considerable number of books have been published touching psychology as applicable to different fields of business and professional effort, and one cannot be urged too strongly to pursue this study for knowledge, profit and pleasure, as well as for practical accomplishment.

One who will develop in power and purpose should not neglect the study of psychology, concentration, and both mental and physical efficiency.

If one is not directed by his mind, his work is not high grade.

To know thyself gives the understanding to know others. To know men means to know the minds of men, and it is by this means one man gains leadership over others. Leadership is the necessary quality for every employer or executive; without it one may not harness other men to his golden chariot.

Psychology is the practical science which guides all who would lead men and multiply the limited success attainable by individual effort.

All wish to be popular, to have influence over others, to be successful above the average, to be respected and our opinions sought, and generally to be considered successful, prominent, intelligent, loyal, courteous, etc. Those who wish to be, as well as to appear, will find the study of psychology a material aid in accomplishing their purpose.

SUCCESS CAN BE CONTROLLED

Education is a failure, unless it develops a man above the average man. As the average man is a failure, we must ascertain what are the thoughts and actions of successful men. The principal causes of business failure are incompetence and inexperience.

The manager of the Bradstreet Company in Boston some years ago, who possessed a mind bent upon investigation and statistics, after studying a vast number of reports of business failures and successes, announced his conclusion that eighty-six business men in a hundred fail; that two in a hundred succeed. This leaves twelve persons in each hundred whom he was not able either to definitely allot to the success or failure group. They had not succeeded in succeeding, nor had they, one might say, succeeded in failing.

John M. Siddall recently said:

"Take 100 healthy men at the age of twenty-five and follow them. At age sixty-five, thirty-six will be dead, one will be very rich, four will be wealthy, five will be supporting themselves by work and fifty-four will be dependent upon friends, relatives or charity."

Dr. Julia Seton, in her book on "Concentration," states:

"Granted that success really means getting what we want, and failure is the lack of power to do this, the next question which presents itself is, Why does not everyone, in every walk of life, get just what he wants, when he wants it, and for as long as he wants it? Why are we not all successful according to our plane of desire? This is the vital point, and the vital answer to it is, we are successful or unsuccessful through our own unaided law.

"Success can be arranged for in every life, just as simply as can any other attribute of human existence. * * * Thoughts are things, and whatever a man "can think" he may become. He can fashion his own material universe by the simple correct control of his own thinking."

EFFICIENCY

Personally, I favor an efficiency course as part of the curriculum in every high school and college. People must be trained, not only to think carefully, but to observe intelligently, otherwise much of what they see will not be transformed into serviceable information. No one accomplishes the limit of his capacity. Compared with what we ought to do, we are making use of only a part of our possible mental and physical resources.

Personal efficiency and industrial efficiency are different, yet they are related. Personal efficiency means the ability to do things and do them right—it means the ability to make full use of all one's latent powers. It means a definite aim in life and the ability to achieve that aim—it means success—for the efficient man will not fail to accomplish his purpose. As efficiency comprises both theory and practice, it is both an art and a science, having definitely recognized principles which may be practically applied.

The great majority of men are engaged in professional, mercantile, manufacturing and agricultural pursuits, and every one has the legitimate ambition of being an employer. This he can scarcely hope to be until he has had hard drubbing in the school of experience, so it is important that the younger generation shall study efficiency as well as philosophy. College is a good place for such study, but remember it is not the only school where one may obtain practical and theoretical knowledge.

It is profitable to study the lives of those who have succeeded. One will find that whatever they undertook, they did their best, and it was efficiently done; particularly note that they stuck until the thing **was** done.

Efficiency experts practice a new profession in advising executives of big business. The late F. W. Taylor, of Philadelphia, received one fee of \$300,000.

AGE OF SPECIALISTS

There is no room today for the haphazard man, whether lettered or unlettered. As the Jack-of-all-trades is master of none, it is the duty of every one to become proficient in some practical affair.

This is an age of specialists, and the public seek specialists in every field of professional or business service. They seek those who excel in a particular line, and whether he has a classical college degree is not asked.

It is the thing to specialize. St. Paul was inspired when he said: "This one thing I do." The "know how" counts much, but it is the **doing** that achieves success.

Many years ago a German professor of Entomology, during his last illness, warned his son, saying: "My son, I have specialized in red beetles and black beetles. It was too much for one man. I have not succeeded as I might have done, and I warn you to profit by my mistake. As you have worked with me, I advise you not to scatter your efforts as I have done, but concentrate either on red beetles or black beetles."

The greatest service that our schools and colleges can render any student is in teaching him how to reason well and to concentrate intently upon a definite subject for an extended period. It is said that my neighbor, Thomas A. Edison, while completing experiments for his carbon electric lamp, in a vacuum within a glass bulb, concentrated intently upon his subject for about sixty hours without food or sleep. Success crowned his effort, as it will crown that of anyone who recognizes and practices the principles of concentration and perseverance.

This idea is not new. Men who have done things worth while have excelled in one field of effort. Our industrial, professional and military masters were not such by chance, but as the result of earnest and sustained effort of the will. Theirs was the will to win. Will you win? Yes, you will, if you will to win!

CHOOSING YOUR WORK

If, as statistics show, a greater probability of success is attained by corporations, it is not surprising that young men seek to become identified with them. This requires one to submerge his individuality to a certain degree to team work, just as it is necessary for each one in an orchestra to be letter perfect, but to mark time and volume with his associates, under direction of the leader. This is splendid training for discipline and develops team work.

In fact, it is another form of team work, known as co-operation, which offers us the greatest opportunities of future development, especially upon a fair and just basis to both capital and labor, effectuating a fair distribution of resulting profits.

No doubt the best and surest plan for all is to start life in the employment of another, being careful in the selection both of the line of business as well as the character of the individual concern. After acquiring a practical knowledge, one will then be justified in considering a plan to set up shop for himself, but until that time is ripe he would do well to restrain his ambitions and subdue his pride, while doing well the work at hand.

Select your life work intelligently, go to it enthusiastically and stick to it everlastingly. The difference between the thoroughbred and the mongrel is all the difference in the world, because the mongrel will let go.

'Tis grit that makes the man,
The lack of it the chump,
To be successful, boy,
Hang on and hump.

PROFITING BY MISTAKES

Everyone may enjoy the privilege of taking infinite pains in his work, and it may be freely employed without fear of patent or copyright infringement. Thomas Carlyle said that "Genius is the infinite art of taking pains."

One must be prepared for disappointments and mistakes, but remember there is a difference between disappointment and discouragement. As the best of men are only relatively efficient, one can afford to make a certain percentage of errors of the head, but none of the heart. Colonel Roosevelt well said: "The only man who never makes a mistake is a man who never does anything."

If another points out your mistake be gracious and alert to learn. Get wise. The only crime in making a mistake is making the same one twice, for he who will not be advised cannot be helped on. It is a trite saying that "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." Hard knock lessons are a feature of the University of Hard Knocks.

If others become discouraged that is the time to buck up and say, like John Paul Jones on the Bon Homme Richard, "I am just beginning to fight!" Never become discouraged. Nobody knows what he can do until he tries hard; yes, very hard. It was President Lincoln who said: "We shall not succeed unless we try." Any one can surrender; only the brave fight on to victory.

There is no easy way, for it is rough and long and hard. It means dig, dig, dig; frequently with no visible reward. None is more mistaken than he who hopes to find an easy way to wealth and knowledge, or who hopes to get something for nothing, for it is not the way of life. This reminds me that over the portal of a Chinese temple is the motto: "Nothing for nothing is given here." It is so everywhere.

GOOD MEASURE

We must give value received if we expect to receive anything of value. The honorable man who undertakes seriously to build up a reputation in his line, whatever it may be, must in every transaction give heaping measure, well pressed down and flowing over. His customers, or his clients, are his friends, with whom he is co-operating to a legitimate end, and he makes common cause with them and will assure them satisfaction and value received. This makes for confidence and good will.

One who realizes this philosophy may be said to have a good education, even if he is not qualified to discuss the binomial theorem or demonstrate a problem in conic sections. These may help his mind, but not his principles.

While one who invests his capital or his labor should seek a fair reward in profit, measured in money value, good character is a reward in itself. The making of money is not the chief aim of man. There are other things more worth while and more difficult to obtain. A man with only money is the poorest man I know.

Nevertheless, one should not take life too seriously. Perhaps a good mental attitude is to play it as one would a game, give and take, rush and defend, strive to excel, but be fair. Play according to the golden rule. This rule may not always make money, but it will make men.

There is a joy of right living, thank God, that is not measured in dollars and cents.

A young miss from New York visited her aunt in New Orleans recently. While there she visited the French market and made some purchases. The child bought some oranges and the woman at the market stall added some figs, saying: "They are for lagniappe." It was explained that this is an old word and an old custom. It means something for good measure and makes the customer better satisfied.

MAN BUILDING

Man-building is the problem of every man and is worthy of the best that is in him. Success will depend largely upon his high quality of character, equipment and performance. Everyone qualifies to some degree, but it is the business of man to take what he already has and make the most of it. As Dr. Fiske says: "The supreme interest in life is development to become what we are capable of becoming."

Both necessity and ambition urge us on and up. Just as one is most interested in the particular game in which he most excels, so men gain an interest and enthusiasm in proportion to the success they attain. Enthusiasm stimulates practice by which experience is had, and as practice makes perfect, experience makes for efficiency; efficiency makes for success; success makes for happiness.

One should train his head, his heart and his hand. The former requires one to develop the powers of analysis, reasoning and judgment. Emerson said that "The most difficult of all tasks is to think," and surely accurate thinking is most necessary to success. It is what we think which makes us what we are.

Every person who has trained himself to think accurately and reason well is an educated person, and this ability and habit may be acquired out of college or within it; one may learn everywhere and in all circumstances if his mental attitude is receptive. If one is hungry and thirsty for knowledge and will pursue it diligently he will become a scholar and be among the best learned, if not among the most learned.

Oliver Wendell Holmes made the Autocrat at the Breakfast Table say: "The world's great men have not commonly been great scholars, nor its great scholars great men." Many men of brilliant education must be measured as failures in life, not because they have not accumulated wealth, but because they have not done the things which were worth while, and have not done their bit to make this a better country for all of us to live in.

CHARACTER

Colleges are but preparatory schools for the University of Hard Knocks, wherein at best one can hope to keep up with his class. The lessons are hard and the hours of work and study are long. The measure of success to be attained will depend largely upon how one's character stands up under strain of temptation and upon one's mental qualities, for efficiency is now a mental structure on a moral foundation.

It must be recognized that those who will be happy and content, who will be esteemed by their friends and respected in the community, and who will lead useful lives, must be of good character. Character is bounded on the north by industry, on the east by integrity, on the south by morality, and on the west by sobriety.

Remember that character is what we are, while reputation is only what **others** think we are.

"Character is acquired, not inherited." Make no mistake about that. The old theory of heredity is largely discarded today. A man's career is influenced perhaps one-tenth by heredity and nine-tenths by environment. It is an added argument as to why one should keep good company or none. The social instinct should be directed, for man is a social being.

Any contact with others should always be pervaded by a spirit of helpfulness. To help others to help themselves is the best form of charity, for charity means brotherly love. To help another to enjoy a fair chance in life embodies a fine spirit of co-operation in affording equal opportunity to all.

Every one of us should be able to say: "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul," because life is what we make it.

GOOD HEALTH

The successful man is the man who practices right thinking and living. Good health is a great factor in the attainment of success. Although there are exceptional cases where great things have been achieved by men deficient in some of the senses, or racked with pain, for the average man to succeed good health is a requisite. If there are deficiencies, they can usually be overcome, and it is a duty to do so, for the body should not be neglected, as good health stimulates the mental faculties. Both body and mind may be improved.

Vocational schools are good, just as special lines of reading are good, but the key to success is the will to win. Some men have every educational and social advantage and leave college to take at once a responsible position in the business or profession of their parents and thereby they obtain a flying start.

Others who plod and learn with care, while developing self-reliance and holding steadfast to the things which are true, if they possess health and courage, they have the best start of all for graduation, cum laude, whether in a classical college or in the University of Hard Knocks. It is such who are tapped for membership in the "Society of Fortune's Favorites" and are called lucky, though it was not luck.

The caustic manner of dyspeptics impedes their success, socially, politically and in business affairs. It's a fine thing to be able to eat three square meals a day, without aftermath, and sleep well at night. Shakespeare makes a character about to sit at table say: "Now, good digestion, wait on appetite and health on both."

Good habits, good health, good cheer and good morals are great pillars in the temple that men can build.

Man's first duty is to be a good animal. It was such a man as God gave dominion over all the beasts.

GIVE US MEN

The English Bishop of Exeter is credited with the authorship of a virile short poem which makes an appeal to every man who wishes to do things worth while, whether in time of peace or war:

Give us Men!

Men — from every rank,
Fresh and free and frank;
Men of thought and reading,
Men of light and leading,
Men of loyal breeding,
The Nation's welfare speeding;
Men of faith and not of fiction,
Men of lofty aim in action:

Give us Men — I say again,

Give us Men!

